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### **Gov. Daugaard Appoints Melody Schopp as Education Secretary**

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Dennis Daugaard today announced that he has selected Dr. Melody Schopp as Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Education.

Schopp is an 11-year veteran of the Department who has been serving as Interim Secretary since the Governor took office in January.

Gov. Daugaard said Schopp's performance in the past three months has been impressive, and she turned out to be the premier candidate among the many who applied and were carefully screened for the position.

"Sometimes the cream of the crop comes from your own backyard, and we quickly realized that with Dr. Schopp," the Governor said. "She has impressive credentials and experience. Her expertise and leadership are exactly what we need in a Secretary of Education. This is an extremely important position, and I'm confident that Dr. Schopp is the perfect pick and will do an excellent job."

Schopp said economic development is the Governor's top priority, and a well-educated work force is a key job-creation element.

"South Dakota students are among the brightest in the nation, and Gov. Daugaard wants to be sure they continue to get the best K-12 education possible so they are fully prepared for college, technical institutes and jobs of the future," Schopp said.

Schopp has more than three decades of experience in education. She began her career in a country school, was an elementary teacher in Lemmon and served as a school board member for nine years. Schopp first came to the state Department of Education to work on technology in schools. She later became Director of the Office of Accreditation and Teacher Quality, and then advanced to Deputy Secretary of Education.

Some of her career highlights include creation of the South Dakota Virtual School and leading the development of teaching standards for the state. Schopp also was recently appointed to the Executive Committee of the Council of Chief State School Officers' Deputies Leadership Commission.

Schopp has a Master's Degree in Elementary Education and a Ph.D. in Educational Studies and Higher Education.

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\*Schopp (SHAHP)